

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An information processing apparatus which is connected to other information processing apparatuses and which decrypts and uses encrypted information under the control of a control apparatus, ~~characterized by said information processing apparatus~~ comprising:

~~transmission means for transmitting storage means for storing appropriate proxy account settlement information for to said other information processing apparatuses;~~

~~requesting means for requesting said other information processing apparatuses to provide appropriate accounting information according to said proxy account settlement information stored in said storage means;~~

~~first reception means for receiving said accounting information sent by from said other information processing apparatuses, said accounting information related to payment of media contents received directly by said other information processing apparatuses from said control apparatus, wherein said accounting information is generated in accordance with said proxy account settlement information in response to the request from said requesting means;~~

~~sending means for sending said accounting information received by said first reception means to said control apparatus;~~

~~second reception means for receiving the registration conditions from said control apparatus, said registration conditions prepared based on the results of the account settlement performed according to said accounting information sent by said sending means and received~~

from said control apparatus; and

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control means for controlling the operation of said information processing apparatus,
based on said registration conditions received by said second reception means.

2. (currently amended) An information processing method for an information processing apparatus which is connected to other information processing apparatuses and which decrypts and uses encrypted information under the control of a control apparatus, characterized by said information processing method comprising:

a storage transmission step of storing transmitting appropriate proxy account settlement information for to said other information processing apparatuses;

a requesting step of requesting said other information processing apparatuses to provide appropriate accounting information according to said proxy account settlement information stored in said storage step;

a first reception step of receiving said accounting information sent by from said other information processing apparatuses, said accounting information related to payment of media contents received directly by said other information processing apparatuses from said control apparatus, wherein said accounting information is generated in accordance with said proxy account settlement information in response to the request from said requesting step;

a sending step of sending said accounting information received by said first reception step to said control apparatus;

a second reception step of receiving the registration conditions from said control apparatus, said registration conditions prepared based on the results of the account settlement performed according to said accounting information sent by said sending step and received from

said control apparatus; and

a control step of controlling the operation of said information processing apparatus, based on said registration conditions received by said second reception step.

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3. (currently amended) A providing medium that provides a computer-readable program for executing a process to an information processing apparatus which is connected to other information processing apparatuses and which decrypts and uses encrypted information under the control of a control apparatus, characterized in that said process comprises comprising:

a storage transmission step of storing transmitting appropriate proxy account settlement information for to said other information processing apparatuses;

a requesting step of requesting said other information processing apparatuses to provide appropriate accounting information according to said proxy account settlement information stored in said storage step;

a first reception step of receiving said accounting information sent by from said other information processing apparatuses, said accounting information related to payment of media contents received directly by said other information processing apparatuses from said control apparatus, wherein said accounting information is generated in accordance with said proxy account settlement information in response to the request from said requesting step;

a sending step of sending said accounting information received by said first reception step to said control apparatus;

a second reception step of receiving the registration conditions from said control apparatus, said registration conditions prepared based on the results of the account settlement performed according to said accounting information sent by said sending step and received from

~~said control apparatus; and~~

All
~~a control step of controlling the operation of said information processing apparatus, based on said registration conditions received by said second reception step.~~

4-7. (canceled)

Sub B1
8. (new) An information processing system for processing media contents from a content provider, comprising:

at least one information processing apparatus;

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a control apparatus configured to control the flow of said media contents from said content provider to said at least one information processing apparatus; and

a master information processing apparatus in communication with said at least one information processing apparatus and said control apparatus, said master information processing apparatus including:

a first transmitter to transmit appropriate proxy account settlement information to said at least one information processing apparatus;

a first receiver to receive accounting information from said at least one information processing apparatus, said accounting information related to payment for media contents received directly by said other information processing apparatuses from said content provider, wherein said accounting information generated in accordance with said proxy account settlement information, and used to perform account settlement with said control apparatus;

a second transmitter to transmit said accounting information received from said

first receiver to said control apparatus; and

a second receiver to receive registration conditions from said control apparatus,
said registration conditions prepared in accordance with said account settlement
performed with said control apparatus.

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9. (new) The information processing system of claim 8, wherein said control apparatus
includes a service provider.

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10. (new) The information processing system of claim 8, wherein said information
processing system includes an electronic music distribution system.

11. (new) The information processing system of claim 8 ,wherein said first transmitter
transmits said appropriate proxy account settlement information to said at least one information
processing apparatus over a local-area network.

12. (new) The information processing system of claim 8, wherein said second transmitter
in said master information processing apparatus transmits said accounting information to said
control apparatus over a wide-area network.